

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An optical article of final or nearly final dimensions, ~~consisting of~~ comprising silicon oxide, ~~as such or optionally~~ modified by the addition of one or more oxides of elements other than silicon, having an almost complete isotropy and dimensions equal to or lower than 500µm.

2. (Currently Amended) Process for the preparation of ~~moulds~~ a mould suitable to manufacture of an optical ~~articles or of these very optical articles~~ article, according to ~~the definition of the preceding~~ claim 1, comprising one or more of the following operations that, all together, can be continuously carried out as a ~~fall~~ cascade and/or stopped at the desired or suitable step:

a) preparation of an original high precision mould;

b) ~~possible reproduction~~ reproducing, in a siliconic rubber or other suitable compound, of one or more imprints, having the same sizes and a reversed symmetry with respect to ~~the moulds obtainable through the preceding steps~~ said mould;

c) preparation, by the employment of one or more of the products obtained in the preceding steps, of the optical article having reduced dimensions and reversed symmetry with respect to the starting mould/imprint; according to a sol-gel procedure;

d) ~~possible~~ preparation, inside the so obtained optical article, of a further article again having reduced sizes and reversed symmetry, or of imprints according to the preceding item b);

e) ~~and so on, possibly, through~~ repeating the preparation of optical articles by sol-gel procedures and/or imprints according to b), ~~till~~ until the desired dimensions or, ~~anyhow, till~~ the lowest dimensions on the ground of the physical ~~limit~~ limitation of the process is achieved;

f) ~~possible~~ separation, in relation with any step, of the imprint and/or the article obtained in the very step.

3. (Currently Amended) Process for the preparation of ~~moulds~~ a mould according to the preceding claim 2 in which the mould of item a) is produced ~~by a material preferably selected among~~ from nickel/phosphorus alloys on aluminum carriers and aluminum alloys.

4. (Currently Amended) Process for the preparation of the optical article ~~of claim 1~~ according to claim 2 in which the sol-gel procedure comprises a ~~preliminar~~ preliminary step wherein the mould is cool filled with a sol containing the ~~interesting~~ oxide precursors, the sol is gelation gelled, the gel ~~drying~~ is dried, the ~~removal of~~ gel is removed from the mould and the ~~final miniaturization of~~ the dried gel is miniaturized.

5. (Currently Amended) Process for the preparation of an optical article according to the preceding claim 4 in which the mould is previously submitted to surface treatments by means of appropriate antiadhesive agents.

6. (Original) Process for the preparation of an optical article according to claim 4 in which the mould is previously filled by a silicon oxide precursor.

7. (Currently Amended) Process for the preparation of an optical article according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 6 in which the mould is filled also by a precursor of at least an oxide of titanium, germanium, lanthanides and rare earths.